



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

June 19, 2013

TO: Michigan State Waterways Commission

FROM: Ronald A. Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division

SUBJECT: Eagle Lake Land Proposed Acquisition for access site

Status and Process

Attached for your review for future consideration is a resolution to recommend the purchase of 9.62 acres of land located on Eagle Lake in Southwest Michigan. The lake is nearly 380 acres, and has connecting waterways to three smaller lakes, totaling 461 acres. Currently, there are no public boating access sites (BAS). There does exist a private launch and one road ending access point on Eagle Lake.

Background

One goal of the State Waterways Program is to provide public boating access to Michigan's lakes and streams.

Currently, there are over 1,100 boating access sites statewide on Michigan's lakes and streams.

The 9.62 acre parcel became available through a bank on a foreclosure. Our policy is to have our local district staff recommend locations for potential acquisition if it would create public boating access to key lakes and other waterways. The bank contacted the DNR asking if we were interested in the property.

Process

Public Act 210 requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to contact the local units of government to determine if they would be interested in purchasing and operating a BAS.

Process for considering BAS acquisitions.

1. The site is assessed to determine if it is feasible to create boating access to the waterways.
2. Zoning is reviewed to ensure that a public boating access site is feasible.
3. Ensure that the land could be developed in compliance with environmental requirements.
4. Collaborate with local units of government, such as the road commission, to ensure there is support for the concept.
5. Hold a public input session to enable the public to learn about the proposal and to provide comments, suggestions, and questions.
6. Address the public input, respond to the comments, and consider the public's input in the proposal.

7. Respond back to the public and consider the proposal with the Michigan State Waterways Commission for their assessment, and ultimate recommendation to the Department regarding the planned acquisition.

Status

Following the public open house held May 30, 2013, the staff prepared the attached summary of public comments. Also, a letter has been received from the attorney representing the Eagle Lake Improvement Association expressing concern over the zoning and other related matters.

The zoning details were reviewed (see attachment) that identifies the zoning as Lake Residential. This zoning does permit "Parks" within the zone.

There has been support for the access site if we are open to park amenities on the land.

A petition was signed locally by 342 individuals in support of acquiring land that would provide public boating access to Eagle Lake and the chain-of-lakes.

The privately owned land has been used for over 50 years to launch boats and to access the lake. This has resulted in unregulated parking problems in the area.

Recommendation

1. Postpone action on land acquisition.
2. Waterways Commission assign the matter to the facility subcommittee to work with staff further to review the public comments and to discuss options for a conceptual site plan.
3. Subcommittee and staff continue the communication between the stakeholders to seek a consensus plan to move forward.
4. Recommend a plan of action at a future Michigan State Waterways Commission regarding the feasibility of acquiring the land.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Concept Plan
3. Zoning definitions
4. Public open house notes
5. Letters from
 - a. Attorney
 - b. Township
 - c. Road Commission

cc: Eagle Lake Improvement Association
Ontwa Township
Cass County Road Commission
Painter Juno Christiania Lakes Association
DNR Parks and Recreation
DNR Real Estate Section